Get Out the Vote

Grants help nonprofits mobilize clients to cast their ballots | Page 3
The New York Community Trust supports vital nonprofits working to make a healthy, equitable, and thriving community for all, through the generosity of past, present, and future New Yorkers.

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Questions or comments on the newsletter?
Contact us:
(212) 686-0010
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Give to the Annual Fund for Critical Needs

Make a big impact on the lives of New Yorkers. It’s easy.

The Trust’s Annual Fund gives donors an easy way to address the critical needs of our city. This year, with gifts ranging from $25 to $25,000, people like you joined us to support groups that registered voters in the Bronx, offered college prep classes to foster youth, and helped get senior citizens in prison a fair chance at parole. Our donors are always impressed at how big an impact their gifts can make. Below you’ll see a few ways to give.

Four Ways to Give

**BY CREDIT CARD:** Find the ‘Give Online’ link at the top of our website, nycommunitytrust.org.

**CONTACT GAY YOUNG** at (212) 686-2234 or gy@nyct-cfi.org.

**WRITE A CHECK** to Community Funds, Inc., 909 Third Ave., 22nd Floor, New York, NY 10022 (on the memo line, write ‘Annual Fund’).

**IF YOU ALREADY HAVE A DONOR-ADVISED FUND,** we’ll transfer your gift. Look for the ‘Annual Fund’ tab on MyNYCT.

Don’t forget to check if your employer makes matching gifts! Some companies will double or triple your contribution, increasing the impact of your generosity.

“...The New York Community Trust has uncanny expertise in identifying and sustaining community groups. That’s why I contribute to The Trust with pleasure and enthusiasm.” — Norma Kerlin Buchman

TESTING THE WATER:
Trust donor Norma Kerlin Buchman and Vice President for Donor Services Gay Young test water samples of Flushing Bay in Queens with grantees Riverkeeper and Guardians of Flushing Bay. Photo by Ari Mintz for The Trust

A NOTE FROM GAY

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Nonprofits Tapped to Register Voters
An interview with Yushu’a Smith

New York City and State consistently have among the lowest voter turnouts in the country. Community Votes was created to help social service providers register and educate voters.

Over the past three years, The Trust has given Community Votes $190,000 to expand this successful model. Part of this support came from our Annual Fund. We spoke with Yushu’a Smith, 35, one of the many “get out the vote” volunteers trained in this effort.

Tell us about your job.
I’m an evaluation associate at Phipps Neighborhoods, a Bronx nonprofit that works to eradicate poverty by providing career training, education programs, and more. I help collect and crunch data on how we are serving our clients.

How did you start getting out the vote?
My supervisor asked if I wanted to get trained on voter engagement—and I like to learn new things—so I said yes. I like helping people have a voice and harness their power as voters. I also want to make sure the people who best represent our community get elected.

Have you been able to register and educate a lot of people?
Yes! Phipps Neighborhoods serves hundreds of people every day. I trained and equipped staff at the front desks of our Melrose, Soundview, and West Farms locations. Clients and neighbors coming in for classes or child care walk away as registered voters. We also have a table at our spring health fair and community centers, and we ask folks to register and fill out voter pledge cards that get mailed to them at home.

How do you measure success?
We saw a 13 percent increase in turnout in a recent primary and a 10 percent increase in the general election among voters contacted by Phipps Neighborhoods and six other groups that were trained by Community Votes. The investment in training staff to be civically engaged will also pay off long term.
Making NY Fairer for Black Families
Grants back school, health, and housing reforms

Compared to their white peers, black New Yorkers are more likely to receive poor maternal health care, get suspended or arrested at school, and face obstacles to inheriting wealth. Three examples of The Trust’s efforts to reduce these long-standing inequities are:

Building Wealth in Brooklyn
Intergenerational wealth is the single largest determinant of a family’s economic well-being, but in historically African-American neighborhoods, such as Bedford-Stuyvesant and Bushwick, thousands of family heirs fail to inherit property.

For example: If a parent dies without a will and their home has a mortgage, a bank could foreclose on the home if there is no clear owner. Even if the heirs try to pay the mortgage, the bank may not accept their payment.

Grow Brooklyn will use a $97,000 grant to help Brooklynites pass family homes to the next generation. It will offer workshops to seniors on the need for end-of-life planning, help heirs secure assets when there is no will, and provide technical estate-planning assistance to legal service nonprofits.

Improving Maternal Health Care
In the U.S., black women are three times more likely to die from pregnancy-related causes than white women. “Income, wealth, and education do not explain the difference in maternal morbidity,” says Irfan Hasan, The Trust’s program director for health and behavioral health.

With a $300,000 grant from The Trust, the Fund for Public Health in New York City will train clinicians and administrators at health care institutions on trauma, bias, and emergent issues in childbirth.

Making Schools Fair for Girls of Color
Young women of color are disproportionately getting arrested and suspended at school.

With $250,000 of support from The Trust over three years, Girls for Gender Equity created an advisory council composed of young women of color that suggests school discipline and policing policies to the City Council and monitors their implementation. The advisory council was able to secure funding for additional staff to reduce discrimination against girls in schools. This year, among other efforts, the council is working to reduce school-based sexual violence.

“Better care for black women before, during, and after childbirth is critical to the City’s goal to reduce maternal morbidity. The Trust’s support on this important issue exemplifies a public-private partnership that New Yorkers can be proud of.”

— Dr. Oxiris Barbot, Commissioner of the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and Board Chair of the Fund for Public Health in NYC
Nonprofit developers of affordable housing have been missing out on the clean energy economy, and so have their tenants. Federal tax credits for installing rooftop solar panels are geared to homeowners, not renters, so many low-income communities not only miss out on the subsidies but end up paying higher energy bills—plus they’re exposed to more pollution. Some people call it the “green divide,” and The Trust is helping bridge it.

Five years ago, Gov. Cuomo committed nearly $1 billion to expand solar projects statewide. And eligible customers, including tenants, will receive credits on their electric bills for energy produced by the sun. We’re helping two nonprofits shine some of the benefits on low-income communities.

Here Comes Solar One
With our two-year grant of $300,000, Solar One will work with its partners to install solar gardens atop three New York City Housing Authority affordable housing complexes, lowering energy costs for 350 families, and placing at least 10 residents in solar industry jobs. Solar One will also bring solar power to at least 25 additional affordable housing buildings and develop new ways to finance solar projects.

Go With JOE
Over the next two years—working closely with Solar One—Joint Ownership Entity New York City, known as JOE NYC, will use $140,000 to install the City’s largest affordable housing solar energy project. The organization, which pools thousands of apartments owned by nonprofits, making them more efficient and competitive, will arrange financing, monitor installation, and manage rooftop solar systems on 14 buildings. Energy credits earned will offset utility bills for the buildings’ common areas, such as lobbies and laundry rooms, lowering costs for residents.

Less Plastic in New York
Although State lawmakers agreed to ban most single-use plastic bags, effective in 2020, a Long Island group doesn’t think that’s enough.

The nonprofit All Our Energy will use $15,000 from our Long Island Community Foundation to make the case for a statewide ban on all single-use plastics. Meanwhile, it’s also organizing cleanups, handing out reusable bags, and pushing for a bag-fee law in Nassau County. Suffolk County retailers have been charging 5 cents a bag since January 2018. And it’s helping—1.1 billion fewer bags were used in Suffolk last year, a drop of about 80 percent.

Cheaper & Cleaner:
Solar power provides residents living in affordable housing with lower electric bills, and helps the City meet its ambitious greenhouse gas emission-reduction goals. Here, Solar One’s Juan Para speaks at a press event attended by Manhattan Borough President Gail Brewer and others on the rooftop of an affordable co-op in Harlem.
The Power of Permanence

2019 Philanthropic Trends Report

For 95 years, The New York Community Trust has served as New York’s community foundation—granting more than $4.6 billion to support nonprofits.

But where, exactly, does that money go? Which causes do philanthropically minded New Yorkers care most about? And how has their giving changed over the years?

To answer these questions, we mined The Trust’s data and interviewed and surveyed scores of donors to create this 2019 Philanthropic Trends Report, which looks at the last 20 years of giving in America’s largest city.

The report will be available on Nov. 18. Download it at nycommunitytrust.org/PhilanthropicTrends or contact Vice President for Philanthropic Initiatives Kerry McCarthy at (212) 686-2578 or kem@nyct-cfi.org.

Fighting ‘Planning Fatigue’

After superstorm Sandy ravaged Jamaica Bay in 2012, government officials, residents, nonprofits—virtually everyone—was gung-ho to ensure it never happens again. The City alone outlined $20 billion in projects to protect the coast, finance recovery programs, and research how to withstand future flooding. But projects bog down, residents get discouraged, and “planning fatigue” sets in. With $138,000, a coalition led by Science and Resilience Institute at Jamaica Bay is re-energizing community leaders, educating residents, and helping them stay engaged and equipped to hold officials accountable.
Immigrant Students Organize on Campuses

Hear from Roxana Herrera on how she is improving her school

Roxana Herrera, 22, is a fifth-year student at City College double-majoring in Psychology and Political Science. She is the president of the City College Dream Team and a member of the New York State Youth Leadership Council, and is a recipient of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (commonly known as DACA). She aspires to get a PhD focused on mental health and undocumented families and youth.

A recent grant of $90,000 to the New York State Youth Leadership Council supports work to organize Dream Teams on local college campuses that press administrators to adopt policies and provide services that support immigrant students.

“It is incredibly stressful to be an undocumented college student. From the basics, like being able to afford tuition, textbooks, and a Metrocard, to planning a career and life in an uncertain future and hostile political climate. None of it is easy.

I became president of the City College Dream Team because the former leaders graduated, and they needed someone to step up. I did not have prior experience leading a club; this will be my second year as president, and I am still learning. We are identifying issues that impact us, helping build membership, and scheduling meetings with the president of the college to talk about our vision and our needs.

Our Dream Team is creating a resource guide to bridge the lack of support undocumented students receive at City College. It will center and prioritize undocumented students without DACA.

We also would like the school to do its part. For starters, it could create a resource center where information on financial aid, scholarships, fellowships, and internships is available to our community. If we had a center, students could start a lending library for textbooks and hold career and life-planning workshops.

We’d also like the school not to require a Social Security number for setting up basics like email, and to update outdated information on its website reflecting changes brought by the New York State Dream Act.

Mental health service providers on campus also could be better trained. I went in for counseling only to spend the better part of the session explaining to my counselor what DACA is. I never went back.

We are pushed to pursue higher education and are tokenized for our ability to persevere despite the obstacles we encounter. Once we are inside these institutions, our struggle for educational equity is admired. But those who hold up our accomplishments also have the power to ease our struggle at their institutions. Our colleges should recognize us and our ability to promote change by addressing the challenges we face; collaborating directly with undocumented students is the answer.”

In Westchester:

In the Ossining School District, more than 5,000 students from 52 countries speak 42 languages. A grant of $30,000 from our Westchester Community Foundation is helping Parent Leadership Institute involve immigrant parents in the school budgeting process and other civic affairs. Above, members speak out for broader access to drivers licenses for noncitizens.
First Person | Lita Elvers

“I’ve lived in different New York neighborhoods most of my life, from Jackson Heights, Queens, to Greenwich Village, where I am now. It’s a big city, but I like the little communities that bring people together, like the chess players in Washington Square Park or the people from all walks of life that I know at my senior center. My late husband, Wally, and I made great friends volunteering at the American Museum of Natural History. We’ve always enjoyed being a part of the action.

Looking to the future, I worry. I wonder if my children, but especially my grandchildren, will be able to enjoy the good things I’ve had. It’s a comfort to know I’ve put The Trust in my will to preserve what I love about this city.

I know that at The Trust I get the most bang for my buck, and my gift will be well managed by people who know what they’re doing. As a member of their Legacy Society, I look forward to meeting like-minded people who believe as much as I do in the power of community.”

If you’ve already included The New York Community Trust in your will or estate plans, we want to honor you in our Legacy Society. Contact Marie D’Costa at (212) 686-2461 or md@nyct-cfi.org to let us know or to join us.